

# 10 Tips To Help Prepare For CHILD CARE

American Children's Safety Source

**N**ever be afraid to ask questions; your child's safety depends on it!

**1. Ask to see the facility's license and credentials.** Also, request information on the owner(s) and/or director(s). If none is provided, seek another facility. Ask for a written statement outlining the facility's program and philosophy on education and discipline. Discuss your mutual expectations and put them down in writing.

**2. Ask if the facility carried out background checks on the employees and if they were fingerprinted.** Ask to see employees' resumes and references. Have the employees been thoroughly checked out?

**3. Pay attention to the person's reactions to your questions.** Did they maintain eye contact? Did they seem honest and sincere? Did they supply the information you requested?

**4. Talk to other parents whose children are cared for at the facility.** Ask them about their experiences with the facility.

**5. Meet the employees and watch how they work with children.** Do the children seem happy? Does the facility have a low adult to child ratio? (1:4 or 1:6 is ideal for preschoolers.)

**6. Be sure the facility has an open door policy** allowing you to see or pick up your children at any time. If possible, spend some time at the facility. If you are discouraged from visiting, *be wary!*

**7. Never give blanket authorization for field trips;** make sure you know where and when your child is being taken away from the facility.

**8. Ask what the facility's policy is for picking up children.** Children should only be released to people whom you have pre-approved. A list of these names should be kept on file.

**9. Ask what the facility's policy is for absences.** Do they call to check on a child's unscheduled absence? Do they ask that you let them know when your child will be absent? These are important child safety steps!

**10. Do a thorough safety check of the facility and outside play areas before you make your final decision.** Check for basic cleanliness, proper fire safety equipment such as fire extinguishers and working smoke detectors that are routinely checked, as well as fire exits that are properly marked and accessible.